

Bugs R All

Newsletter of the Invertebrate Conservation & Information Network of South Asia (ICINSA)

Asian weaver ants attack a dung beetle



Group of Weaver ant (*Oecophylla smaragdina*) attacking dung beetle

Oecophylla smaragdina (Fabricius) is an Asian Weaver Ant that can be found as far west as India, as far north as Taiwan and mainland China, and as far south as Australia's tropical zone (Azuma et al. 2006). Weaver ants, such as the African species *O. longinoda* (Latreille), are arboreal but can be found foraging on the ground occasionally (Dejean et al. 2007). They are voracious foragers who attack practically every organism that comes in contact with them. Farmers have used the species for biological pest management because of its predatory characteristics

(Huang & Yang 1987). They eat a variety of invertebrates, including beetles, flies, and other hymenopterans (Tsuji et al. 2004; Kusters & Belcher 2004).

I saw a troop of weaver ants fighting a dung beetle during the night at Athgharia Village, Nalbari District, Assam. The dung beetle was attracted to light during the night, and a colony of weaver ants quickly attacked the dung beetle. This was the first time I had noticed such an active hunt in the surroundings.

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